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Participatory Culture for Social Justice: Students Deploying New Media as a Call to Action and Social Change

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Abstract: This case study explores the teaching experiences of two university faculty members who guided their students through the development of digital media artifacts distributed online for an authentic audience. A sociology instructor guided her students in the creation of artifacts documenting issues of racial inequality on campus. Students presented university data on race and ethnicity, recorded videos depicting the personal narratives of students of color, and remixed media from university archives into an interactive map which displayed evidence of racism on campus. After sharing her classroom experience with colleagues in the law school, a second instructor was inspired to conduct a similar project. Law students developed artifacts to educate the public on the difficulties of immigration and the policy barriers which hamper lawful attempts to immigrate to the United States. Each class curated their artifacts online, invited others to explore the materials, and developed accompanying toolkits to encourage reuse of the materials in both formal and informal educational settings. Halverson's design principles for participatory media spaces are used to frame and make meaning of the faculty participants' experiences.

Keywords: participatory culture, participatory media spaces, signature pedagogies, knowledge building communities, new media.

Students publishing their work to the Internet is not a new phenomenon. There are plenty of examples of student work readily available on video sharing services and entire websites created by students and their instructors (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Sener, 2007). However, these examples of student work look exactly as expected — student work, homework — the product of a student's learning uploaded to the Internet. While these artifacts are publicly available on the Internet for easy transmission and sharing between classmates and the instructor, one must stop and ask themselves: who is the intended audience for this student-generated content?

When students make the products of their learning publicly available on the Internet, they could inherit an authentic audience simply on the possibility that someone outside of their classroom may discover their work (Halverson, 2012). This could be parents and friends, or someone who stumbles upon their work through an Internet search. The primary audience is typically the teacher and other students within the same course of study. A public, authentic audience is secondary. There is evidence that, by providing an authentic audience (even when that authentic audience is secondary), student motivation is increased during the production of artifacts which demonstrate their learning (Chen & Brown, 2012; Curwood et al., 2013).

This case study explores the teaching experiences of two university faculty members who guided their students through the development of digital media artifacts distributed online for a primary authentic audience, and provides insights and lessons learned for those who wish to take on projects of this kind in their own classroom. A sociology instructor guided her students in the creation of artifacts documenting issues of racial inequality on their campus. Students presented university data on race and ethnicity, recorded videos depicting the personal narratives of students of color, and remixed media from university archives into an interactive map which displayed evidence of racism on campus. After sharing her classroom experience with colleagues in the law school, a second instructor was inspired to conduct a similar project. Law students developed

artifacts to educate the public on the difficulties of immigration and the policy barriers which hamper lawful attempts to immigrate to the United States. Each class curated their artifacts online, invited others to explore the materials, and developed accompanying toolkits to encourage reuse of the materials in both formal and informal educational settings.

These faculty members facilitated what can be described as participatory culture class projects, with the goal of positioning their students as change agents tasked with educating an authentic audience on the social justice issues at the center of that semester's course. When used in the classroom, participatory culture projects have the potential to foster agency and self-efficacy within students and inspire them to become change agents within the communities they may one day serve (Jenkins et al., 2016). Halverson's (2012) design principles for participatory media spaces are used to frame and make meaning of the faculty participants' experiences in this study. As described by Halverson (2012), the application of design principles can provide a better experience for both faculty and students by: 1) providing structure; 2) intentionally embedding assessment into the artifact design process and the final product; and 3) making digital tools and technologies an integral part of the projects. This study shares the faculty participants' experiences in conducting participatory culture class projects, classroom logistics and technical support challenges, and lessons learned from their teaching. The experiences shared in this case study may serve to inspire other instructors who wish to conduct participatory culture projects in their classrooms.

Literature Review

Participatory culture

Participatory culture, as termed by Henry Jenkins and explored through several of his books, describes the creation, sharing, and remixing of ideas, knowledge, and memes. Initially used to describe fandom communities, the creation of fanfiction writing, and artistic endeavors based on popular commercial media, participatory culture has moved "from geek culture to a more globalized mainstream" (Jenkins et al., 2015, p. viii) in classrooms, politics, and social justice.

Jenkins et al. (2009) called for new media literacies to fill the "participation gap" (p. 16), a new concern in the conversation on the digital divide. The participation gap acknowledges a need for the skills and ability to do more than simply consume information, but to contribute, create, and participate. By closing the participation gap, community members can participate through new media as it is "being deployed as the tool by which to challenge the failed mechanisms of institutional politics" (Jenkins et al., 2016, p. 3). A recurring theme in Jenkins' body of work suggested that, since the era of the Web 2.0 read-write-web, the *technical* skills required to participate through remix, creation and distribution are becoming increasingly rudimentary (Jenkins et al., 2009; Jenkins et al., 2016). Scharber et al. (2016) cautioned that, with a constantly lowering technology barrier, teachers should invest time in understanding what constitutes Jenkins' vision of participatory culture, lest we risk "water[ing] down" the concept (p. 301).

Participatory Media Spaces

Halverson (2012) provides a bridge between participatory culture and formal educational settings: the design of participatory media spaces. Like participatory culture, students are participants in the production of media for an authentic audience, however, structure and assessment are provided to ensure that students are also meeting learning outcomes while producing these artifacts. The three design principles outlined by Halverson for participatory media spaces are: a structured learning

environment for the production of artifacts intended for an authentic audience; assessment of both the design process undertaken in the construction of an artifact and the finished product; and the use of digital media tools (Halverson, 2012).

Halverson's First Principle: A structured learning environment

Providing a structured learning environment for students encompasses the process from idea generation through the intentional design of artifacts for an authentic audience (Halverson, 2012). By structuring the generation of ideas, as well as the refinement of those ideas, instructors can set the stage for a successful class project. Halverson (2012) emphasized the development of ideas prior to students beginning the production of their artifacts, cautioning that, when students did not fully develop ideas, they were unable to finish independently. Instructional techniques such as staging and scaffolding (Tay & Allen, 2011; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010) can be used to facilitate a series of both individual and group activities for idea generation early in the semester to help ensure the solid formation of topics to be undertaken by students. Throughout this process it is important to ask what authentic problems the students are hoping to solve and who, exactly, is the authentic audience students wish to target (Halverson, 2012).

Halverson's Second Principle: Assessment of both the design process and finished product

Through the structured generation of ideas, identification of problems, and targeting an authentic audience, these notions should be refined into project-level learning outcomes in alignment with course objectives (Halverson, 2012). By working together to write project-level learning outcomes, assessment will be less daunting for the instructor and expectations are made clearer for the student (Weimer, 2013). Halverson (2012) called for assessment which is "embedded naturally into both the process and the product" (p. 257), where instructors should be assessing both the students' learning process as well as their finished artifact.

Halverson's Third Principle: The use of digital media tools for creation and dissemination

The third principle outlined by Halverson (2012) is the central role of digital media tools within the participatory media space. Tools do not bring about change, as tools themselves are not an environment (Jenkins et al, 2015; Tay & Allen, 2011). Rather than assigning specific tools for students to use in the development of their artifacts, instructors should allow students to self-select tools based on their needs (from a list vetted for ease of use, cost, and privacy settings) to eliminate constraints brought on by unexpected limitations (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Tay & Allen, 2011). For example, one tool may allow a video to be embedded on a page while a similar tool requires the video to open in a new window.

Emergent learning

The learning process that occurs during students' creation of artifacts can be emergent and unpredictable. Students may turn up unexpected information and revelations along the way (Scharber et al., 2016), or they may find that they are unable to access data and resources they need. While Williams et al. (2011) acknowledged that emergent learning is unpredictable, it is "retrospectively coherent" and "not disordered; the order is just not predictable" (p. 45). Through the unpredictability that occurs in these learning spaces, instructors must be aware of student progress through frequent formative assessment, identification of incorrect information, and errors

within student work (Williams et al., 2011). Structures must be in place so the instructor can be alerted to such issues and determine suitable alternatives as needs arise. In the management of emergent learning, Williams et al. (2011) suggested directing students on what they should not be doing versus what they should be doing; a concept the authors refer to as "negative constraints" (p. 46). For example: *Students should not produce a written essay. What other ways might you go about presenting this information?* This flexibility within classroom management may be difficult to balance when determining how much autonomy to provide students and how much structure should be in place to maintain both organization and student momentum (Kessler, 2013; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Waldron et al., 2018; Weimer, 2013; Williams et al., 2011).

Knowledge building for social justice

Knowledge building communities (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2006) provide time and space for students to generate knowledge as a community of learners, for the community, under a continuous improvement process to advance knowledge. Reeve and Sharkawy (2014) expand on this concept by applying a social justice lens to the knowledge building model, where students produce knowledge and call their authentic audience to action. The generation of knowledge and ideas for an authentic audience has the potential to increase student agency and forward the ideas, narratives, and counter-narratives of students from underrepresented backgrounds (Alalem, 2023; Frith & Richter, 2021; Reeve & Sharkawy, 2014; Scharber et al., 2016). The sharing of knowledge generated by students within underrepresented communities can empower, inform, and educate a wide and diverse authentic audience (Jenkins et al., 2016). Using a social justice lens, students are made aware of their responsibility to critically engage with the resources they encounter as consumers and creators (Reeve & Sharkawy, 2014; Scharber et al., 2016).

Preparation for future roles

Jenkins' edited book, *By Any Media Necessary* (2016), bridges participatory culture to participatory politics, where new media is deployed as a call to action and social change. Educators have observed an increase in both interest and agency in future activism roles when facilitating participatory social justice activities in their classrooms (Fonseca & Wahab, 2021; Mueller et al., 2014). As described by Fonseca and Wahab (2021), social justice issues "became a backdrop for our teaching" (p. 214) and "found their way into our classrooms" (p. 216). By engaging students through participatory media spaces, these classroom projects are "not simply preparatory for adult roles but also meaningful on its own terms as an intervention into core debates of our time" (Jenkins et al., 2016, p. 7).

Methodology

This descriptive case study explores the experiences of two tenured faculty members guiding their students in participatory culture class projects. The descriptions within provide insights on their self-reported teaching experience and includes lessons learned that may prove beneficial to those who plan to conduct projects of this kind in their own classroom. Descriptive case studies, as described by Merriam (1998), are useful for presenting innovative teaching practices which, when disseminated, can "form a database for future comparison and theory building" (p. 38).

Faculty members were invited to participate in an IRB approved research study to better understand faculty experiences when facilitating student projects which specifically included the production of digital media artifacts intended to educate an authentic audience. The case was bound by faculty members who had conducted projects of this kind in their classrooms, and two faculty

members agreed to participate in the IRB approved study. Interviews with the participants were retrospective and conducted after their class projects had concluded. The researcher had served as the instructional designer for the sociology instructor's department and provided technology support to her students as they completed their projects.

Semi-Structured Interview

The review of the literature was used to inform the composition of semi-structured interview questions. Interviews were conducted individually and began by asking the faculty participants to describe their class project, where their project was hosted on the Internet, and which technology tools their students used. The researcher viewed these artifacts online and followed along as the faculty member described their project. Next, faculty were asked to describe their motivation and inspiration for facilitating their class project, the outcomes they hoped to achieve, and self-report the outcomes they observed. The faculty were then asked to self-report on how they perceived these outcomes compared to previous semesters before participatory culture projects had been adopted in their teaching.

Faculty were asked to self-report on their observation of student motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy in the classroom as well as their own motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy in facilitating the classroom activities. The types of support the faculty member received while conducting their projects, both technical and pedagogical, were discussed as well as challenges faced, lessons learned, and what they might do differently the next time they facilitate a project of this kind. Finally, faculty were asked to self-report on their interactions with authentic audiences, reactions to their classroom projects, and whether these interactions and reactions were from their campus community or beyond.

Analysis

Interviews were manually transcribed, and the resulting transcripts were analyzed both manually and with NVivo software. Interesting aspects of the transcripts were highlighted, a pre-coding technique recommended by Saldaña (2021) where highlights are made to "rich or significant participant quotes or passages" (p. 30). Initial data analysis used an inductive, exploratory approach to coding.

Next, a deductive approach was employed, informed by the review of the literature, which served to revise and consolidate codes. The codes were further refined through iterative cycles until the number of codes were reduced and themes were generated. As a final step, these themes were compared to Halverson's (2012) principles, which are used to help frame and make meaning of the faculty participant's experiences. (Neither the researcher nor the participants were familiar with Halverson's (2012) principles prior to this study.)

Interview transcripts were emailed to the faculty participants for member checking, and they were encouraged to point out any portions of the interview that may be so specific as to identify their students. A draft manuscript of the study was also emailed to the faculty participants for member checking, and once again the participants were encouraged to point out any portions of the manuscript they found too specific or did not accurately represent their experience. Although the digital media artifacts produced by students are publicly available online, both the faculty participants and the researcher agreed to not disclose information that could potentially identify students within the resulting manuscript.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. The study's focus is on faculty experiences within a bounded case and data from faculty participants was self-reported. Because the focus is on the experiences of the faculty members conducting participatory culture projects in the classroom, student data (such as satisfaction with the technique, course grades, or tracking of student learning outcomes) were not collected. Prior studies reporting on student experiences and outcomes include Alalem (2023), Curwood et al. (2013), Mueller et al. (2014), and Scharber et al. (2016).

Background and Context

This study was situated at a small, private university in the southern United States with an approximate twelve-to-one student-to-faculty ratio. Twenty nine percent of the students enrolled at the university identify as people of color. The sociology instructor taught an undergraduate course elective on race and ethnicity with 15 enrolled students. Most students were sociology majors, and the sociology instructor noted those who typically enroll in the race and ethnicity course come prepared to address tough issues which other students may be uncomfortable discussing in class. The law instructor taught a seminar on immigration policy with 18 enrolled students. These students are in the university's law school and ranged from recent college graduates to those in their mid-thirties. Seven of the 18 students enrolled in the law seminar with the intent to produce a research paper and were not required to contribute to the project, though most were inclined to assist throughout the semester.

The sociology instructor had previously assigned a final paper in her race and ethnicity class but found this culminating project left her dissatisfied. A paper did not seem like the best way to end a class that had wrestled with tough issues through deep dialogue. She asked her students what they wanted to do for a final project, which resulted in the ambitious brainstorming of ideas such as developing new curriculum. Expectations were scaled back after students were told about the university's curriculum committee and their processes, as well as the timeline involved for undertaking such an initiative. The students and faculty negotiated a project scope which would meet the students' goals for content development and distribution. The students also identified an authentic audience for this content: their university's students and faculty, university administration, and faculty and students at other universities who were exploring issues of race and ethnicity on college campuses.

The sociology instructor had written an application for a teaching award through the university's center for teaching and learning. Her application would become a blueprint for other participatory culture projects at this university and two other universities. Faculty members from five additional universities reached out to the sociology instructor on social media to share that they had planned to utilize her students' content in their teaching.

After learning about the work produced by sociology students, a law school faculty member was inspired to take on a similar project with her students the following fall semester. As described by the law instructor: "the fact that the [teaching award] application then became the template for another professor to try it, I think, is a really good indicator that [teaching awards] really helps to spread these ideas." The motivation for allowing her law students to produce digital media on immigration policy for a public audience came from both a need to curate up-to-date class materials, as well as a sense of frustration among students in the face of recent changes in immigration policy by the country's presidential administration. Coupled with rampant misinformation on immigration law and immigration policy available on the Internet, the students and faculty identified a need for non-partisan, accurate information available for public consumption and presented in a way that

would be appropriate for those who do not study immigration law and policy. Describing her classroom climate in previous semesters, the law instructor shared:

> Everything was so awful and class discussion would kind of feel like we were all sitting around doing collective hand wringing. And I felt like maybe if I could harness some student energy towards doing something that was external facing, to try to educate people about the issues, that that would be a much more effective way to kind of deal with the reality of the current moment.

Description of Digital Media Artifacts

Sociology Artifacts

Sociology students used contemporary data on campus race and ethnicity to produce infographics using Piktochart (piktochart.com), a tool which allows students to build graphics from attractive templates. By providing both data and the context needed to interpret this data in the form of an infographic, the data became accessible to a wider audience. The authentic audience (university students, faculty, and administration) may not have been capable of accessing this data or interpreting the meaning behind and implications of this data without prior background knowledge and guidance.

Searching the university library's archives, students uncovered newspaper articles, photos, and other archived materials depicting evidence of racism such as: the university's board of trustees continued refusal to admit Black students following *Brown v. Board of Education*; a portrait of an esteemed alumni and playwright of the silent film *The Birth of a Nation* which had been displayed in the common area of the university's library; and the university-affiliated hospital's eugenics program which had sterilized residents within the county. Photos and digitized clippings from newspapers and yearbooks were collected and aligned to points on a map showing buildings and common areas around campus where the events referenced had occurred. Google's My Maps feature (mymaps.google.com) places a pinpoint on the map which allows students to type in a description, upload a photo, and add a link to more information.

A total of six artifacts were created by students in the race and ethnicity course, each with an accompanying toolkit for educators and community leaders who wish to use an artifact as part of their teaching. Toolkits contained objectives and recommended readings. Each student in the class was identified only by their first name for their privacy. The sociology instructor allowed her students to choose how they wanted to be attributed to their work, and some students were concerned about having their name associated with a project discussing racism as they entered the corporate job market.

Law Artifacts

A total of three artifacts were developed by immigration policy seminar students. Each of the three artifacts contained two or three subsections, as immigration policy can become quite dense and background knowledge and context is necessary for understanding. These students opted to include their first and last names, and they, too, developed toolkits with learning objectives and recommended readings.

Law students used a path metaphor to describe how immigrants arrive to the United States as citizens, permanent residents, or how their eligibility for admission is determined at the border. Each path one can take results in a branching scenario, as conditions along the way determine one's

outcome. Students used Prezi (prezi.com) to create this interactive, branching demonstration of the complexity of immigration, as no one path leads to citizenship or permanent resident status.

A case study about a family fleeing from Honduras was presented by students, accompanied by documentary photographs depicting children and their families. Students led readers on a journey from Honduras to the U.S. border and describe the conditions which resulted in the family's need to flee and seek asylum in another country. The military, hurricanes, lack of food, and gang violence are described in vivid detail through the remix of documentary-style storytelling, videos from television news stations, and non-partisan statistics on asylum seekers. This media is provided with additional context for understanding the implications of immigration policy.

Similar to knowledge building for social justice as described by Reeve and Sharkawy (2014), the artifacts developed by the immigration policy seminar students also prompt a call to action. Students aligned with The American Immigration Council (a nonprofit, non-partisan organization) in the need for immigration reform, justice for asylum seekers who are separated from their children at the border, and renewal of the U.S. government's Family Case Management Program.

Findings

Five themes were identified in the exploration of the faculty participants' experiences with participatory culture projects in the classroom. Halverson's (2012) three design principles for participatory media spaces were used to frame and make meaning of the themes on structured or flexible approaches, assessment, and digital media support. The need for instructional support, in addition to digital media support, also emerged from the faculty members' experiences. Student agency and ownership of the projects – important tenets within knowledge building for social justice (Reeve & Sharkawy, 2014) or participatory politics (Jenkins et al., 2016) – were evident in the experiences shared by each faculty member and they intend to revisit this pedagogical approach in the future.

Student Agency and Ownership

Despite receiving a teaching award from the center for teaching and learning, the sociology instructor and her students received no acknowledgment from the university administration — one authentic audience her students had targeted. Asked if she had concerns about her students highlighting current issues of inequality and the history of racism at the university, the sociology instructor responded that she was worried about the administration's reaction and notes that she probably would not have undertaken this project with her students prior to receiving tenure. Her students, she observed, had taken ownership of their project and were ready to address the administration and defend their content in the event they were challenged:

> I honestly didn't know what was going to happen and I remember talking it through with the students about what might happen. I probably wouldn't have done this before tenure. But the students could back it all up. That's the thing. They had the data, they had the analysis, and they were ready. They were like 'if the administration wants to argue with us, we'll argue with them' and 'we'll tell them we read this book, have you read this piece of research, what do you think about this argument.' You know, they were ready. So, I thought what's my job if not to give my students every opportunity I can to share their knowledge. And that's what this was.

While the sociology students were motivated to bring attention to issues on their campus, law students were motivated to provide non-partisan context on the country's legal hurdles which deter lawful immigration to the United States. Describing her classroom climate and observing her students' frustration and inability to engage with immigration policy in a meaningful way, the law instructor shared her reasoning behind a project that could position students as change agents:

> I felt like our seminar discussion [in prior semesters] was impoverished because it felt like when we're talking about immigration policy, in the time of [President] Trump, we're all sitting around discussing depressing things among ourselves. In the past several years in my seminars, often I've had discussions with students where I'll frame it like 'what are you going to say to Uncle Joe at Thanksgiving.' That was the methaphor or theme that I often used as we talked about how to explain these complex issues in a way that the public would understand because there's such a need for people to be educated and to have the basic knowledge instead of just defaulting to these very polarizing conversations… This time I had three principles that were going to guide my course. One of them was that we were going to create an outward facing 'something.' There was such a need for people to have good information about immigration policy and these issues.

Both faculty members firmly acknowledged their observation of student ownership during these projects from the very beginning, which appeared to be driven by the students' agency in bringing attention to the issues they had selected.

Approaches: Structured or Flexible

While the sociology instructor, teaching an undergraduate-level course, kept the topics in her race and ethnicity class narrow and focused, the law instructor provided much more flexibility for her students' topics as she was teaching a graduate-level seminar. This broad approach to student topic selection is a change she plans to make the next time she teaches the immigration policy seminar, moving instead to a participatory culture project consisting of a narrow range of topics and tighter focus. Structure, as discussed in Halverson's (2012) first principle for participatory media spaces, leads to the formation of clear ideas and tighter focus from the earliest phases of project development through dissemination. The sociology students were carefully led through a structured approach in their topic selection and formation of ideas, with topics aligned to the course objectives. Graduate-level law seminars, however, offer more flexibility than an undergraduate course. This flexibility was naturally carried into the law students' participatory culture project, which led to a more challenging classroom management experience for the law instructor as compared to the sociology instructor's undergraduate classroom.

For example, one group of law students wanted to explore a policy which turned on a technical legal issue. This added more work for the law instructor, as it was outside of the scope of the course and, perhaps, should not have been included in the initial topic selection. The law instructor shared: "the point of the course is that we're not studying [technical legal issues]... Students would be responsible for learning a technical legal issue and that was problematic in the sense that they would be submitting drafts and I would find errors."

Assessment

Both faculty members acknowledged that while assessment of the final project was fairly straightforward, assessment of the process was time consuming. As Halverson (2012) outlined in her

second principle, assessment within participatory media spaces, assessment should occur throughout the process of developing artifacts, and then the finished artifact should be assessed as well. Law students drafted their work inside of collaborative documents on Google Drive, providing a convenient bird's eye view for the law instructor to review student work throughout the process. The addition of more formative assessment opportunities aimed at individual student learning is a change the law instructor plans to investigate the next time she teaches the course.

The sociology students were peer-assessed and instructor-assessed throughout their project. Towards the end of the semester, the sociology instructor realized that she was going to award more A's in her class than she typically would due to the quality of work students were producing. She visited her department chair in advance to explain what was happening: "It didn't have to be the case that virtually everyone got an A. Individual work could have been screwed up, individual people within groups could have screwed up, but everyone pulled their weight." By carefully documenting evidence of student learning during the semester, the sociology instructor was able to defend her decision to award higher grades in this course as compared to past semesters.

Digital Media Support

Prior to designing her class project, the sociology instructor met with an instructional designer assigned to her academic department and a digital humanities librarian located in the university library. The university librarian provided website design support, space on the library's WordPress server to host the students' artifacts, and guidance on copyright and selecting an appropriate Creative Commons License to encourage sharing and adaptation of the students' artifacts. The instructional designer provided a list of suggested digital media tools students might consider when designing their artifacts as well as office hours for students to stop by as a group when they had questions or needed support.

The law instructor met with the law school librarians and the sociology instructor when planning her class project. The sociology instructor, providing peer-to-peer faculty support, was instrumental in encouraging another participatory culture project on campus. The list of digital media tools used by the sociology students were suggested to the law seminar students, and the structure used in presenting the project as a curated collection of stand-alone, yet related artifacts with toolkits was also used.

Part way into the project, the law instructor recognized her students needed more support than she and the law school librarian could provide as they began building their artifacts. She described a class period where students became frustrated by the logistics of building their own website on a free hosting service, with one student expressing that she did not attend law school to learn how to make a website. This captures an example of students shifting the focus away from content to digital media tools due to a lack of available support services. The law instructor reached out to the university's center for teaching and learning to request multimedia support and was assigned a multimedia support specialist who met with students as they completed their artifacts. The use of digital media tools, as discussed in Halverson's (2012) third principle, are a necessary component for the online dissemination of artifacts to an authentic audience.

Instructional Support

The law instructor and law students did not have the same instructional support as those in sociology. Instructional support specialists (instructional designers and instructional technologists) are assigned to academic departments within the undergraduate college, and the sociology instructor received an instructional consultation prior to the start of the semester on topics such as classroom

management, assessment, and technology tools, as well as referrals to other instructional support services available from the university library. Sociology students also received instructional support, as they were essentially building educational content, and office hours provided by an instructional designer were similar in nature to consultations provided to faculty.

The law instructor cited her sociology instructor colleague as her biggest source of instructional support, as she did not have access to an instructional designer for her project. This demonstrates the importance of several layers of support: peer-to-peer faculty support, digital humanities and digital media support, and instructional design support for both the faculty member developing a participatory culture project and the students developing their own digital artifacts. The law instructor would likely have been less successful had she not had the support of her faculty peer. However, instructional support can help with: Halverson's first principle by providing structure to the project and help with classroom management, time, and logistics; Halverson's second principle by providing direction on how to best implement formative and summative assessment strategies; and Halverson's third principle by locating and calling upon other campus resources to assist with technology pinch-points such as digital media creation and artifact hosting (Halverson, 2012).

Intent to Revisit This Pedagogical Approach

Both the sociology instructor and law instructor look forward to their next participatory culture project with their students. The law instructor is seeking additional resources on campus and has been referred to instructional designers in the university's teaching and learning center who can assist in refining her project and supporting her students. The sociology instructor attempted to build on her students' collection of artifacts with new students the following academic year, but she was told that candidates interviewing for a new faculty position would be giving their teaching demonstrations in her class. This resulted in an unfeasible turn-around time and a reduction in collaborative classroom time. Sociology students were offered the option to create an artifact to be added to the existing collection or write a paper. All students elected to write papers instead.

The reality of one's teaching schedule and obligations imposed on the semester means that a participatory culture project cannot be undertaken each time a class is taught. The right combination of faculty support, student support, time, and a group of students who work well together can make these projects successful. The addition of Halverson's (2012) principles for participatory media spaces – structure, assessment, and digital media tools – can alleviate the instructional and assessment challenges that may arise when undertaking participatory culture projects in the classroom.

Implications

Addressing social justice issues through participatory culture in the classroom can provide students with the knowledge, skills, agency, and self-efficacy to become change agents through the use of new media. Finding the tools necessary — technical, social, and self-efficacy — to engage in participatory culture may lead to continued participation within these communities long after the class project has come to an end (Kessler, 2013). In this case study, both faculty members could sense their students' need for agency, the ability to call for change and reform, and desire to "challenge the failed mechanisms of institutional politics" (Jenkins et al., 2016, p. 3). When participatory culture is used as a teaching method in the classroom, students begin to engage with the communities in which they aspire to serve as a practitioner or change agent as they prepare for future roles in activism, social justice, or politics (Jenkins et al., 2016). Thus, classroom opportunities for engaging in participatory

culture for social justice provides a conduit for students to find agency and autonomy where students may assume they have none.

In this case study, students remixed art, photos, videos, data, and historical archives into a new digital medium – for the advancement of knowledge and critical inquiry – and disseminated this content to an authentic audience. This work is important to document through the use of new media as some universities in the southern United States are beginning the work of reckoning with their past (Biemiller, 2017; Parry, 2020). New media provides a venue for archived media to take on new life in ways that are both compelling and easily disseminated as students call for change.

Participatory culture projects are innovative and inspiring, and, when done well, can motivate other faculty members to transform their teaching with similar class projects of their own. The examples discussed in the present case study push participatory culture towards *participatory culture for social justice* as, perhaps, a signature pedagogy. It is important for educators to document projects of this kind within the scholarship of teaching and learning so these ideas can be shared broadly, compared, and explored through further research.

Conclusion

Halverson's (2012) principles for participatory media spaces were used to explore, frame, and make meaning of the themes emerging from the experiences described by the faculty participants. However, Halverson's principles should also be used during the instructional planning stages when undertaking a participatory culture class project. Halverson's (2012) description of supporting students in participatory media spaces can provide structure to the classroom experience and a fair and equitable means of student assessment. Halverson's third principle, using digital tools for communication, sharing, and production of artifacts, may require additional support for some faculty members who find these necessities are beyond their own skill, time, and resource capabilities. As was demonstrated in the examples presented here, endeavoring upon student projects in participatory culture alone is not advised — especially on one's first try. Peer-to-peer faculty support, the support of librarians and digital humanities experts, instructional designers, and instructional technologists can all play a key role in the support of participatory culture projects.

Engaging students in participatory culture provides an authentic learning experience which extends beyond the classroom into real-life contexts of knowledge sharing and calls to action within a global community. Beyond the social justice and participatory aspects, student engagement with original content — data, archived media, and primary sources — leads to deeper understanding of that content through student-centered active learning practices (Weimer, 2013). As discussed, there were logistical and support challenges along the way. However, both faculty members expect to facilitate similar projects in the future and continue to share their successes and challenges with colleagues to spread the pedagogical practice of participatory culture for social justice.

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